



# Arizona Community Action Association

Advocating, Educating and Partnering to Prevent and Alleviate Poverty

February 2012

## Arizona Community Action Association Newsletter

### In This Issue

[Save the Date: 2012  
Annual Conference!](#)

[Utility Bill Discount  
Programs](#)

[You Can Help Hungry  
Families](#)

[Weatherization Works!](#)

[Training Opportunities for  
Members](#)

[EITC VITA: Free Tax  
Preparation](#)

[Bills of Interest in the  
Arizona Legislature](#)

[Other News](#)

### Keep Up With ACAA

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[Visit our Website](#)

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### Letter from the Director

It's hard to believe we're already two months in to a new year, that the Legislature is back in session and an election is shortly upon us.

We at ACAA are focusing our work in several areas, and as I've indicated in the past, we need your help to achieve our mission of Advocating, Educating and Partnering to Prevent and Alleviate Poverty in Arizona. There are times, I fully appreciate, when it appears that the odds are against us, but I honestly believe that we now have an opportunity to work more closely together with partners who share our vision, and to develop strategies and programs that can help families achieve great results.

ACAA will be reaching out to our current community partners, and to those with whom we have not yet begun to work, in order to better serve individuals and families and in order to truly realize a "community of action." We are working on movement building within our community, we continue to work with the Arizona Assets Alliance in order to ensure wealth building resources are available so families may begin to build or re-build savings accounts and other assets, and we continue to link families in need of assistance with the resources they need, where they need them.

ACAA will hold our Annual Conference May 9-11, 2012, and invite you to join us to hear inspiring presenters, take advantage of substantive programming and laugh a bit with colleagues.

I would also like to extend our congratulations, on behalf of the staff and board of ACAA, to Beth Fiorenza, who is the recipient of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Community

## Want to Help ACAA Work to End Poverty in Arizona?

Our committees are a vital component to the work we do, but we need your help to make them successful. Below is a list of our standing committees. We invite you to join a committee and get involved from the ground up:

- ~ Advocacy
- ~ Annual Conference
- ~ Asset Development
- ~ Energy & Environment
- ~ Fundraising/Fund Development
- ~ Membership
- ~ Nominating

For more information about these committees or to volunteer, please contact us [via email](#) or call us at 602-604-0640.

## VOTER ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE

FRIDAY MARCH 16

### Reclaiming Our Community's Power II

National keynote speaker John Miyasato of the Crossroads Campaigns, a national expert on nonprofit agency-based voter engagement.

Leader Award! Beth exhibits creativity, collaboration, and strong leadership at the Tempe Community Action Agency and we are very proud of her for this well-deserved honor! We always want to hear from you about your successes, your needs, and whatever programs and/or support ACAA may provide. Please call on us!

Cynthia

### SAVE THE DATE! ACAA's 2012 Annual Conference *Creating A Community of Action* May 10 - 11, 2012

Please be sure to mark your calendar and save the date for the Arizona Community Action Association's 2012 Annual Conference! This year's conference will be held at the Wigwam Resort, and registration will be open soon.

#### Event Info:

May 10 - 11, 2012  
Wigwam Resort  
300 East Wigwam Boulevard  
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

[Visit the Events page](#) on our website for more information!

### Utility Bill Discount Programs

As families continue to struggle to pay their utility bills during these hard economic times, it has become imperative to continue enrolling and encouraging families to sign up for utility discount programs. Most of the major utility companies statewide offer a variety of discount programs to low-income customers. These programs generally provide a discount on the customer's monthly bill. Some utility companies have rate discount programs targeted at senior citizens and customers who use medical life support equipment. Families that are enrolled in the discount programs benefit tremendously because it not only saves them money, but also protects them from utility rate increases.

For additional information or to request utility discount applications,

**Friday March 16  
9am - 2:30 pm**

**DISABILITY  
EMPOWERMENT  
CENTER**

5025 E. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

Please note that seating is  
limited

*Please register early.*

**On-line registration and  
details at**

<http://www.pafcoalition.org>

*\$15 per person includes lunch  
and resource materials.*

**Agency Sponsorships are again  
welcome.**

**Contact Timothy Schmaltz at**  
[tim@pafcoalition.org](mailto:tim@pafcoalition.org) **for**  
**information.**

**Support Our Work.  
Donate.**

Our mission of preventing  
and alleviating poverty  
throughout Arizona is  
perhaps more relevant  
now than ever before in  
our history. We cannot do  
the work we do without  
our Board, members, and  
partners and your financial  
support. Please consider  
donating to ACAA at the  
link below.

[Donate here.](#)

**Foreclosure Avoidance  
Event for  
Bank of America  
Customers**

please contact ACAA (602) 604-0640 or your local utility provider  
such as Arizona Public Service, Salt River Project, Southwest Gas  
Corporation, Tucson Electric Power, and Unisource or your local  
Community Action Agency.

## **You Can Help Hungry Families**

Did you know 1 in 5 Arizonans is hungry and over 1.1 million people  
in Arizona rely on SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) to help  
put healthy food within reach? If you serve families in need, there is  
no doubt you're touching the lives of hungry families every day. So  
what can you do to help?

ACAA has built a unique partnership with DES and 14 community  
partners throughout Arizona aimed at targeting education and  
outreach to families in need of Nutrition Assistance and assisting  
households in applying for help. Through a partnership agreement  
with ACAA, our community partners are eligible to receive  
reimbursement for eligible outreach and application assistance  
activities for potentially SNAP-eligible households. The partnership  
process is simple. The reporting is minimal. And the opportunity to  
get reimbursement for activities you may already be doing while  
making a real impact on the lives of those in need is here!

ACAA and DES will be hosting an information session on SNAP  
Partnership and how you can get involved very soon. Please keep  
an eye out for an update on this session, coming via email, and in  
the meantime [check out our website for more information](#) on SNAP  
Partnerships!

*"We've been able to help so many people. Thank you for accepting us as a  
partner and helping us with the vision of helping people. I have grown so  
much through this process. We're excited & proud to be partners with  
SNAP."*

- 2012 SNAP Partner

## **Weatherization (WAP) Is Second Most Successful ARRA Program for Job Creation**

The Weatherization Assistance Program moved up to 2nd out of  
approximately 200 federal programs in the number of direct jobs  
created or retained, at 13,186 for the fourth quarter beginning  
October 1 and ending December 31, 2011. You can see the rankings  
by clicking [here](#).

Since the first quarter 2010, WAP has been ranked in the top 10 in  
the number of ARRA jobs created, a clear indication that  
Weatherization Works!

If you are aware of any of your constituents who are Bank of America mortgage customers and would benefit from speaking to one of our specialists, please encourage them to attend the event by scheduling an arrival time online or by calling 1-855-201-7426 (toll-free). BofA will have specialists on site to serve customers speaking English and Spanish. Event details are as follows:

**Bank of America Sponsored Outreach Event**  
**Thursday, March 8 - Saturday, March 10**  
**8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

**The Scottsdale Plaza Resort**  
**7200 N Scottsdale Road**  
**Scottsdale, AZ 85253**

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

For more information on Weatherization in Arizona, please visit our [Weatherization website](#).

### **Training Opportunities for ACAA Members and Friends!**

ACAA is in the process of planning several trainings for 2012. These trainings will be on a variety of Asset Development topics and will be free to ACAA members and friends! Please take a few minutes to answer the short survey below so that we can provide the most relevant and useful information to your organization.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7V3GCR5>

We will close the survey on Feb. 29<sup>th</sup> so look for dates and topics in forthcoming spring newsletters!

### **Tax Season is Back**

Every January through April, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and AARP Tax-Aide preparers, trained to IRS standards, file taxes for **FREE!** This is a great service for low-income individuals and families throughout Arizona. Tax returns are e-filed and volunteer preparers are trained to ensure clients receive all the tax credits they qualify for. Find out up to date information on where sites are located and what documents are required at [www.cir.org](http://www.cir.org).

Did we mention it's free!?!

### **Bills of Interest**

The Arizona Legislative session is well underway, and ACAA would like to encourage you to get involved! There are bills heard every day in the House and Senate and many of them could impact you or those you serve. Below is a summary list of some of the most pressing bills of interest. If you have questions about how to get involved with any of these issues, please feel free to contact ACAA.

- SCR1031- TABOR referral to the ballot, passed out of Senate Appropriations. If passed, this issue would go to the ballot for public vote and could hamstring the legislature in future years, preventing the ability to be responsive to changing demographics and needs in terms of budgeting. ACAA is opposed to these kinds of arbitrary restrictions on the budgeting process.

- HB2675: Requirement for university students to pay at least \$2,000 tuition bill from other than university sources. This requirement would be very bad for low-income households like single parent families, who are trying to escape poverty through finishing their education. It would act like an anchor, not enable education to be a springboard out of poverty for many families.

- SB1061: Eliminates the mandated school lunch programs for low-income children, allowing schools to 'opt-out' of the program without any feedback from parents. This bill passed the Senate and is in the House, but has not yet been assigned to any committees. Keep an eye out for more information should the bill progress. ACAA opposes this bill.

- HB2519: Amends the unemployment insurance ("UI") statute in several ways - each with the effect of making it harder for persons to get UI. HB2519 passed out of House Banking and Insurance pending further action. The impacts of this bill could be very harmful to Arizona's unemployed workforce.

- HB 2133 : Excludes from Arizona taxable income net capital gains for assets acquired in tax year 2012 and beyond. JLBC has estimated the cost at \$500 million for the general fund plus another \$31 million for local governments - <http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/50leg/2r/fiscal/hb2133.doc.pdf> - see fourth paragraph from the end. Other tax cut bills to watch include: HB 2597 and HB 2488. These bills have passed out of House Ways and Means. No further action in the House. ACAA urges the legislature to consider potential negative impacts of tax cuts at this time.

- HB2791 - A TABOR-like bill limiting expenditures.

- HB 2789 - Duplication of effort for already constitutionally approved activity by the Arizona Corporation Commission. There can be a role for the Legislature in the development of energy policy, but this isn't the solution.

- SCR1021 - Elimination of Clean Elections Law passed out of Senate Judiciary. Clean Elections provides funding assistance for candidates for public office. Citizens interested in preventing corruption in government and keeping clean elections as an option should weigh in. For more information on Clean Elections, [please visit this website](#).

Thanks to [PAFCO](#) for much of the bill summary information provided here.

## **Congratulations to Scottsdale Senior Center!**

Scottsdale's Granite Reef Senior Center recently captured NuStep's prestigious Pinnacle Award. The award is annually presented to the most outstanding senior center in the United States. It recognizes a facility that best demonstrates a culture of whole-person wellness and active aging throughout its organization. NuStep's Steve Sarns was on hand to present the award. NuStep is the maker of recumbent bicycles. Learn more about the senior center at [www.scottsdaleaz.gov/seniors](http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/seniors).

## **Nonprofits Still Face Borderline Finances**

### **Alliance of Arizona NonProfits Releases Annual Survey on the Economy**

The Arizona economy shows signs of coming back from the Great Recession, and nonprofits hope they will soon feel the effects of improvement. However, with rising demand for services but no growth in resources, nonprofits are still struggling to maintain their operations. That is the summary finding of

*Borderline: Hope and Concerns for Arizona Nonprofits*, the Alliance's fourth annual survey on the finances, services and operations of the state's nonprofit community.

[Read the Alliance Report here.](#)